

KEEPING PACE

PITTSBURGH ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

November, 1987

Price \$2.50



IN THIS ISSUE

Page

Secretary's Report.....	1
Board Check!.....	1
The Monitor.....	2
Business Corner.....	3
Empire.....	4
Chem Lab.....	4
GFA Compiler.....	6
Veni, Vidi, Visa.....	7

Page

Ad Rates.....	7
Technical Advice.....	8
Calendars.....	8
The Writer's Tool.....	10
ST Oddities.....	10
Editorial.....	11
President's Report.....	12
Dinner Reservation Form.....	12

NOTICE

Keeping PACE is the official publication of the Pittsburgh Atari Computer Enthusiasts. If you enjoy Keeping PACE and would like to receive it regularly you must do one of two things:

1) Become a dues paying member by filling out the form in back of this issue and by sending a check or money order to PACE at the address on the form in the amount of \$20.00 (per yr./family). Membership is open to individuals and families who are interested in using or programming Atari personal computers. Membership includes the subscription to this monthly newsletter, access to the club's disk library and to all club functions and discounts.

2) If you are an Atari User Group you will continue to receive Keeping PACE if we receive your newsletter on an exchange basis at the address on the form. Also we are interested in exchanging Disk Libraries of PUBLIC DOMAIN PROGRAMS.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES:

Please submit all articles on disk to any of the PACE Officers. Articles may also be uploaded directly to the Editor (412)-941-4107 or the P.A.C.E. Bulletin Board (412) 963-1355.

PACE accepts articles for publication in a variety of formats. Articles may be submitted anytime but will probably not make that month's newsletter if submitted less than two weeks before the regular meeting date. Text files on single sided ST disk and uploads to the PACE BBS are the preferred means of submission.

Due to limitations placed on the use of the meeting room, any retailer wishing to sell products at a P.A.C.E. meeting must register with the President or Vice President one month prior to the meeting. Stipulation for such sales will be explained and will be adhered to. PACE reserves the right to limit space to retailers and others at all meetings.

NEWSLETTER STAFF:

Editor Martha Dycus
Co-Editor John Satriano
Asst. Editor Drew Satriano
Graphic Artist Diane Molnar

PROGRAM STAFF:

Program Director Diane Molnar
8-Bit Librarian Wayne Sigmund
16-Bit Librarian Jerry Cobbs

OFFICERS

President:	Lanny Shoup Lovl Road Baden, PA 15005 (412) 869-7813
8-Bit Vice Pres:	Dave Carey 102 Washington Ave. Evans City, PA 16033 (412) 538-3646
16-Bit Vice Pres:	Rick Gierl 2405 Springwood Dr. Glenshaw, PA 15116 (412) 486-9507
Treasurer:	Joyce Thompson 330 Rolling Hills Rd. Freedom, PA 15042 (412) 728-4756
Secretary:	Debbie Ayres 344 Church Street Bridgeville, PA 15017 (412) 221-1307
Editor:	Martha L. Dycus 341 Carmell Dr. Upper St. Clair, PA 15241 (412) 941-7834
8-Bit Librarian:	Wayne Sigmund 212 Woodland Ave. Glenshaw, PA 15116 (412) 486-2734
16-Bit Librarian:	Jerry Cobbs 233 Smokeywood Dr. Swissvale, PA 15218
Sysop:	John Babson 106 Berwick Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15215 (412) 963-6180
16-Bit At Large	John Satriano 969 Edna Street Bridgeville, PA 15017 (412) 221-8933
8-Bit At Large	William Covert 2621 Tilbury Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15217 (412) 421-6008

The Pittsburgh Atari Computer Enthusiasts (P.A.C.E.) is the largest Atari Users Group in the Pittsburgh area and was founded in August, 1981 to help Atari computer users. P.A.C.E., a non-profit organization, has members in and around the greater Pittsburgh area and all over the country.

We meet once every month at the Green Tree Marriott Hotel, usually on the second Monday of the month, at 7:00 p.m. At the meetings we discuss subjects ranging from new products being introduced to new uses for old products. Members are encouraged to raise any problems they may be having (to which solutions are often found!), and to inform the others of any new discovery they may have made. The meetings are often lively and entertaining as well as educational. Typically, the presentations and demonstrations at the monthly meetings are provided by our members willing to share their experiences, however, sometimes we have representatives from companies that provide products and services applicable to the Atari Computer.

In addition to the regular monthly meeting the ST Special Interest Group (ST SIG) meets monthly to exchange information, ideas and public domain software specifically relating to the new Atari 520ST and 1040ST computers. P.A.C.E. periodically holds classes on various subjects ranging from language tutorials to assistance in the operation of various pieces of Atari related hardware and software. In addition, when we identify products of interest to many of our members we may negotiate a group purchase to pass on the lower cost to our members.

In addition to monthly meetings at the Green Tree Marriott, P.A.C.E. also sends out monthly newsletters to its members, other users groups across the country, and various magazines and manufacturers of Atari-compatible software and hardware. These newsletters contain news, reviews, and help with problems our members are having. Keeping PACE is considered to be one of the better newsletters in the national users group community.

We also maintain, on a 24 hour a day basis, an electronic Bulletin Board System (BBS) open to all. This Bulletin Board is accessible to 300 or 1200 baud modems, at 412-963-1355. In addition to up-to-date "Bulletins", the P.A.C.E. BBS also has user to user messages and a large selection of Public Domain software developed by our members and those of other user groups for the Atari computers.

The programs available on the BBS are just part of the Library of public programs the club has. Numbered (conservatively) at over 1000 different programs, this library contains games, word processors, communications programs, and various utilities and documentation files. Available to members at the meetings for a nominal fee, this software has helped many members since these programs range from small, simple utilities to full power programs that rival commercial software in their abilities, but not their cost.

We invite you to learn more about us. Feel free to drop by one of our meetings. If you would like further information about the club, or a complimentary newsletter, you can call our Bulletin Board and leave a message or write to P.A.C.E. at the following address:

Keeping PACE/P.A.C.E. (C) PACE 1986

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO : PACE - P.O. Box 13435 - Pittsburgh, PA 15243

P.A.C.E. Membership Application:

\$20.00 fee enclosed

Name _____
(last) (first) (initial)

Street _____ Area _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ - _____ Work _____ - _____ Ext. _____

CompuServe ID: _____ Source ID: _____ Other: _____

Computer: _____ 8-Bit _____ or 16-Bit _____

Primary Interest: _____

Questions: _____

I can help with... _____

Keeping PACE/P.A.C.E. (C) PACE 1986

Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual author and do not necessarily represent or reflect the opinions of Pittsburgh Atari Computer Enthusiasts or its officers. Also, some of the material contained herein has been taken from Bulletin Boards across the country and should not be construed as fact. PACE assumes no responsibility for claims made by its advertisers nor for unfilled orders or unsatisfactory merchandise. However, we will try to inform our readers regarding any complaints or compliments.

PIRACY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED at the group meetings nor any gathering of P.A.C.E. or on the P.A.C.E. Bulletin Board.

The material contained in Keeping P.A.C.E. may be reprinted provided that credit is given to the author and to The Pittsburgh Atari Computer Enthusiasts (P.A.C.E.). This newsletter is sent, once a month, to paid members of P.A.C.E. and to other User Groups on an exchange basis.

P.A.C.E. is NOT affiliated with Atari, Inc. All references to Atari products are trademarked and should be so noted.

Please address all correspondence to:

P.A.C.E.
P.O. Box 13435
Pittsburgh, PA 15243

Please check your mailing label to determine whether your membership is about to expire, so that you can renew your membership and avoid any interruption in receiving your newsletter.

DATED MATERIAL

DO NOT DELAY

P.A.C.E.
P.O. Box 13435
Pittsburgh, PA 15243

BULK RATE POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO 31 Bridgeville, PA 15017

SAN LEANDRO ATARI COMPUTER CLUB
P.O. BOX 1506
SAN LEANDRO CA 94577-0374



SECRETARY'S REPORT

by Debbie Ayres

Well, here we are in November already. It is the time of the year when the thoughts of everyone over the age of ten start to wander to the malls and stores. But if you are one of those folks who already have all of their Christmas shopping done, please don't tell me about it. Let me go on thinking the rest of the world is just as much in the dark as I am!

Anyway, on to the October meeting, which started off with a Bank Street Music Writer demonstration by Bill Covert. Bill took us on a guided tour of this versatile program, which turns your Atari into a composing, editing and playback tool, as well as a music performer.

Wayne Sigmund, our 8-Bit Librarian, then did a demonstration of the Library Disk of the Month. This time the disk was devoted to a program called 'Cute Labels', which can take any PrintShop icon, and any font, and make labels. The disk also included several PD PrintShop utilities, for making, altering, printing PrintShop icons, and side B of the disk included a large selection of fonts. Some of the fonts are actually pieces of different graphics, which allow you to create the entire chess set, or a train, instead of your name and address!

John Babson's nationally famous disk labeler program was next on the agenda. This is the 8-bit version of the ST program that is getting excellent reviews and comments (and generating the sale of lots of labels!) from around the country. The program allows the user to print the entire directory of a disk, or to select, sort, and categorize the contents of a disk by name, extender, and/or the status of individual files. After using the program and seeing it demonstrated, I am sure this version will be as well received as the ST version.

If you missed the fun of October's meeting, why not come to the meetings in November and get in on all the action. The next 8-bit meeting is November 9, and the ST meeting is November 23. Besides the demonstrations, raffles, discussion and fun, be sure to be there and learn about the latest things coming up in December.

Happy Thanksgiving!
Debbie Ayres
Secretary, P.A.C.E.

---< AGENDA FOR NOVEMBER 8-BIT MEETING>---

Calc Magic, a spreadsheet
Library Disk demo or video
Break
Raffle
Typing Tutor and Word Invaders,
software to learn to type, and to
play a typing game

--==>AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!<==--

---<AGENDA FOR THE NOVEMBER 1ST MEETING>---

MT-C-Shell
Protos
Public Domain Software demonstration
EZ Draw
Cyberscope

--==> Plus a Raffle, Library Demonstration
and lots of other stuff! <==--

[illegible]

BOARD CHECK!

by John Babson

This month a few new programs have been added to the download section of the BBS as a result of our attending the Boston Atari Show and meeting with the other user groups at the Show. For the Atari 800/XL/XE's we now have the most recent Amodem terminal program version 7.5 and CUTE LABEL, an address label making program that puts print shop graphics on a one inch high label. For the ST we have added version 2.3 of STWriter.

One of the users of the BBS requested that the menus be changed so that they did not appear all the time because this slowed the performance of the BBS. Most of the menus have, therefore, been changed so that you will need to press a question mark to get a listing of all the menu options available (sometimes RETURN works also). I welcome any recommendations anyone may have to improve the operation of the BBS, so feel free to leave me a message and I'll see what I can do.

We are still somewhat limited by the 20 Megs of storage space on the BBS. We have many times this amount in available public domain programs in our library. We are working on expanding the storage capacity of the BBS, but until this happens we will be moving programs off the BBS to make room for other programs.

I went to the Northeast Atari Computer Show on October 11 and 12 to represent PACE and sell labels and public domain disks from our library. There were 56 booths rented to 46 vendors and 6 Atari users' groups. Their attendance was about 2000, which was about equal to the attendance at the Detroit show. While there, we gave the label programs to user groups from Maine to Connecticut and as far west as Rochester, NEW YORK. They promised to send us some of their PD software from their libraries and also include us on their newsletter exchange if we were not already on it. The following vendors were there: Rhode Island Atari Computer Enthusiasts, J-Bug (16-Bit), A-Bug (8-Bit), Fort Devans Computer Club, A.B.A.C.U.S. (Acton-Boxboro Atari Computer User Society), JNL Industries, Avant-Garde Systems, Astra Systems, Compu-Club, Berkley Microsystems, MiGraph, Analog Sales, RF Microtech, Seymour Radix, Hybrid Arts, Foresight Resources, QMI, Prospero Software, Atari Explorer, Computer Success, Syntronics, Dr. T's, Kuiton Music Center, Word Perfect, Soft Logic, Delphi, Analog Publishing, Start, Hartech USA Ltd., Software Haus, Michtron, Omnitrend Software, Best Electronics, Terrific Corp. True Basic, Bit Bucket, Computer Eyes, Megamax, Practical Software, Electronic Arts (Software Connections), ST Xpress, Virtusonics, Computer Bug, Eidersoft USA Inc., Sophos Chess, Alpha Systems, and Supra Corp.

Cam Laing and Tom Arena of ACENEW and M.E.N.A.C.E. couldn't have been nicer in helping me during and after the show. Tom has collected over 800 different AMS music files for the 800/XL/XE's (many of his own creation) and was selling these at the show. He had also prepared a collection of Midi songs on cassette that he was selling which was fantastic. I didn't get a chance to listen to it until I got home, but really enjoyed hearing it. He spent many long hours preparing the tape and making copies, but unfortunately, not very many people at the show knew it was available. If anyone is interested in getting a copy, let me know.

Al Glick and Lee Pappas did an admirable job in organizing the show and many others worked very hard to make it successful. Everyone who attended appeared to have a great time. The next show is in Washington, DC, and a group from PACE will be there representing the club and drumming up support for the show we are planning for March in Pittsburgh.

<<<<<<<<<>>>>>>>>>

THE MONITOR
by Jerry Cobbs

I've been saying for a long time that I was going to write some more for the newsletter, so here is the first of a few

articles about new software, hardware and books. The first product I'd like to discuss is "The SURREAL-TIME CLOCK," an internal time clock developed by SURREAL SYSTEMS, INC.

Are you tired of having to reset the date and time every time you boot up your system? Well, if you are, then I have the product for you... The SURREAL-TIME CLOCK by SURREAL SYSTEMS, INC.! I have been using this internal clock for the last six months without the slightest bit of trouble or problem and I highly recommend it.

Let's talk a bit about the benefits this clock offers to the ST owner. First, the clock takes approximately 20 to 30 minutes to install. The hardest part is taking the cover off your ST. The whole package comes on what looks like a ROM chip from your motherboard. You pull the correct operations system (OS) chip and install the SURREAL-TIME CLOCK chip and then piggyback the OS chip on top. Once that's done, put the whole computer back together (carefully) and boot up with the supplied program disk.

There are two folders -- one for the 1040 ST and one for the 520 ST. I should explain what is in each folder. First, there is the program to turn the clock on and another to turn it off. Second, there is a program to set the time and date. Last but not least, there is the surreal accessory which consists of a digital clock, menu bar clock, calendar, alarm clock, date circulation, free RAM size and options (12 or 24 hour clocks). The SURREAL-TIME CLOCK runs on internal lithium cells which will run for approximately 10 years. The clock is rated at an accuracy of better than one minute per month. In the six months that I have been using the clock, I have not had to reset the time at all due to a problem with accuracy.

The product also comes with a 90-day warranty from the date of purchase, which is good news just in case there is a problem or a bit of trouble.

The SURREAL-TIME CLOCK sells for \$49.95 for the 4520 version and \$59.95 for the 1040 version. If you would like more information or want to order your own SURREAL-TIME CLOCK, call SURREAL SYSTEMS, INC., c/o Charles Smeton (301) 465-6412 or Rob Cherney (301) 465-5598. Thanks to Charles and Rob for the opportunity to review their product.

To continue on I would like to tell you about some new books from Abacus. If you were unsure of some commands for such programs as Lotus 1.2.3., dBASE III/III+, Turbo Pascal, GW-Basic, Microsoft Word and MS-DOS, have I got the pocket size reference guide for the new low price of \$9.95 from Abacus Software. I have been taking a look at the MS-DOS version and it is a great help for understanding and working with MS-DOS

PC-DITTO. So, if you are having a hard time and don't want to spend big bucks for an MS-DOS book from your local bookstore I would say to order this. To get more information call Abacus Software at (616) 241-5510. Thanks to Arnie Lee, President of Abacus Software, and Julie Carle for the product to review.

THINGS TO SEE IN THE FUTURE: a review of Barbarian from Psygnosis, Sub Battle Simulator from Epyx, Goto from Spectrum Holobyte Inc., the new version of Word Writer from Timeworks, Empire from Interstel Corp., Breach from Omnitrend Software, and much more. Until next month take care and keep your mouse clean.

[illegible]

BUSINESS CORNER

by

Bob Morgan

I must admit that I was extremely honored and pleased when Martha asked me to write a monthly business column for this newsletter. My goal will be to provide the serious business user an honest evaluation of products. As a business person myself, I find it necessary to rely upon others in particular areas of expertise, to guide my choices on selected issues.

I have chosen one of my favorite topics to start off this series -- software evaluation. While serving as the computer center coordinator for Community College South I instituted a four credit course in software evaluation. This article will attempt to give you the highlights of that course.

Often we are told "they" say you should always choose software before choosing a machine. While this argument has some merit, I would not call it completely correct. Most machines today have software that can perform your job successfully. What then, should be your criteria for choosing the best software?

First, Second and Third -- It must be easy to use! Let me repeat that again -- It must be easy to use. I have seen software that is "able to leap tall buildings in a single bound, faster than a locomotive and can ...", but after three weeks into my course the students still could not type a single sentence using the product!

If software is not easy to use, people won't use it. Let's assume for now the product passes my first three tests -- It's easy to use, it's easy to use, it's easy to use (is there a message here?). The next thing I look for is -- was this product written for this machine or is it simply a "port" from another machine?

Don't get me wrong, a "port" of a product from one machine to another might be great; on the other hand it can simply be a way for a company to make a fast buck on a popular title. Case in point -- Word Perfect. This excellent product (a review of this product is coming) could have simply been "ported" from the IBM environment and would probably have sold well because of its reputation on the IBM side. Rather, Word Perfect went that extra mile and completely rewrote the product so that it would take full advantage of the features of the Atari ST. It has pull-down menus, mouse capabilities, and tons of easy to use features.

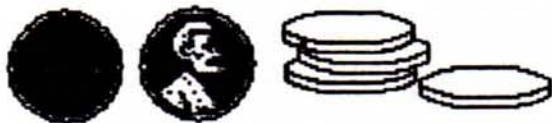
My fifth test (be patient, there are only ten) -- does the product meet my needs?

If I am looking for a word processor to type business letters, create a simple document and once in a great while help me compose America's next great novel, I should not select a product that can do everything in the world. Often people ask me for a product that can do what I just describe and when I show them the product that I think they need they ask, "Can it do automatic footnotes, display multiple columns on the screen, and allow you to type in foreign languages?"

I guess this would be analogous to buying a ten speed bike for a youngster's first tricycle! A product should provide for my needs, but often the price (in both money and effort) of the "extra" features might render the product useless because of tests one, two, and three -- IT MUST BE EASY TO USE!

Next time I will conclude this article with tests six through ten. Stay tuned.

(Bob Morgan taught chemistry at Thomas Jefferson High School for nine years. He developed the computer curriculum for the school and taught all of their computer courses for an additional four years. He created the Systems and Programming Education Center for Pittsburgh National Bank's programming department and ran it for four years. He served as CCAC, south campus' computer center coordinator for a while as well as taught a full load of courses. For the last five years he has been President of Morgan's Computer & Education Center, Inc.)

[illegible]



EMPIRE

by Interstel,
Distributed by Electronic Arts
for the Atari ST Computers.
Color or Monochrome.

by Bob Schwartz

BASICS:

EMPIRE is a strategic game of world conquest. On a scale of war games, it would stand closer to games like RISK than the historical simulations such as KAMPFGRUPPE. The solitaire version pits you against either 1 or 2 computer controlled opponents and will accommodate 3 human players who begin with one city and attempt to conquer one of the numerous random maps available. You can even create your own. Except for your initial city, the remainder of the map is blacked out. As military units are built, you must explore, expand, and defend your empire. Each visible screen amounts to roughly 1/9 of the complete map. Scrolling is handled using the standard GEM bars on the right and bottom of each screen. The remainder of the 30 commands can be accessed by pull down menus and/or the keyboard.

Cities may normally produce armies, planes, subs, destroyers, cruisers, aircraft carriers, battleships, or troop transports. Armies may take 6 turns to complete, while for a battleship, you can expect to wait 60. This method of procurement takes the place of the more conventional monetary systems employed by most games of this type. Units move and fight with specific advantages and their construction must be geared to the type of map chosen and the current enemy strengths encountered. Enemy movement is always hidden from the controlling player. A typical game can last 150-500 turns or 6-20 hours. A save feature is included and can be accessed at any time. The program is not protected, but the security system requires entering words from the manual before loading can continue.

COMPARISONS:

EMPIRE fits into the same category as SSI's COLONIAL CONQUEST. While the ebb and flow is similar, there is considerably more depth. Graphics and overall control are comparable if not identical to games designed by Roger Damon (FIELD OF FIRE, WAR GAME CONSTRUCTION, & PANZER GRENADIER). Icons represent the varied units on screen. Like INTERSTEL's first release STAR FLEET, the manual is approximately 100 pages, but set up in such a way as to allow you to begin very quickly and refer to specific

sections to explain details. After one goes through the manual, you will seldom need it except for the security system. In an attempt to tie in all their products, INTERSTEL's ads suggest that EMPIRE is part of their STAR FLEET universe. The connection is a reach at best.

OVERALL:

EMPIRE is flatly the most addictive game I've played on my ST. Due to the numerous setup options, replay value is considerable. Its obvious that the designers put a huge effort into converting and improving this main frame classic. Two words of caution. Due to the detail of the icons, a monitor is mandatory. The game is, therefore, rendered unplayable on a TV. Furthermore, if you are inclined to try a 3 human player game, be warned that time requirements could approach 50 plus hours. An option for "Play By Mail" arguably could take years to complete. That not withstanding, for my money, EMPIRE is the best computer game since MULE. I'm willing to bet that buyers will be tempted to call in sick the day after they purchase it. I did.

<<<<<<<<<>>>>>>>

CHEM LAB
FOR THE XL AND XE

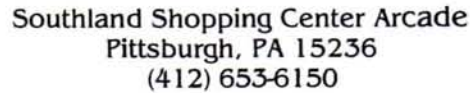
by Terry Frits
reprinted from

Rockford Atari Computer Club Newsletter
October 1987

First let me say I am not a chemistry major or any kind of expert on chemistry. My only experience with chemistry was as a teen making gun powder and blowing holes in the back yard or setting my dad's picnic table and garage on fire...or making Hydrogen and nearly setting the neighbor's house on fire. That's another story, but it does demonstrate the need for just such a program as CHEM LAB from Simon & Schuster. The introduction of the book that comes with the program states that all of the experiments could actually happen in real life. If the chemicals you mix would cause an explosion it will explode on the screen, or if they catch fire they do it in the computer (not on your dad's picnic table). There is also a note to parents and teachers noting that the purpose is to let young minds experiment with science and chemistry without the danger, cost, or mess of chemicals and supplies.

The manual is one of the best I have seen. It is written to the young person without talking down to them, yet uses words they can easily understand. It has exact loading instructions and defines all keys used in the program. It talks a lot about chemistry and its uses in life. It has a glossary of terms and definitions, has

(continued on page 6)



**This Coupon is good for 30% off the
regular retail price of any Atari ST
software in stock.**

(1 per customer, expires Dec. 15, 1987)

a section on the chemicals and their state and formula (did you know the formula for gold was Au?). My favorite part is the CHEM LAB notebook for entering the experiment. Again, as you can see, I am very impressed with the instructions and documentation that come with this program, AND...it's even hard bound.

Once you've read the instructions (which is a must to begin using the program), you will be instructed on how to use the robot arms, pick up beakers and flasks and connect them. You will also learn how to measure and pick up the solids, liquids and gases needed for your experiments. Then you're ready to begin one of the 50 experiments that come with the disk, so you need to enter the lab. The main lab boots up with two robot arms, 3 gas dispensers, a solids dispenser, a liquid dispenser, and the equipment platform. Using the keyboard you can add fire, beakers, flasks and other chemistry items you will need for your experiment.

The first experiment is a practice one intended to add a little humor. It's named "Drink Me" and requires powdered baseball, bubble gum, supernova juice, soda pop, and Alaskan gas. The rest of the experiments use real chemical names, and although there are 50 experiments, you can change around the chemicals and amounts to add variations to each experiment; so the experiments can be almost countless.

I loaded and ran the Drink Me experiment and followed their directions and blew up part of my lab and one flask. At least it wasn't the back yard or basement. After playing with CHEM LAB for awhile my pros and cons are...well I really couldn't find anything I didn't like about the program except having to share half of the disk with Commodore, but there is something I think the program could use: a quick reference card for the keys and different experiments. It's not really a big problem and someone could make their own, but it would be nice to have.

Other than that, I am very impressed with the program and the book that comes with it. I would suggest an age group of 6th or 7th grade and up for this program unless your child is very bright in science. The list price is \$39.95. The Atari sound and graphics are very well used and wondering what will happen on the next experiment keeps the user interested. Even at the list price I think this is one program that is a winner and should be looked into if you are considering educational software for your children.

[illegible]

DON'T FORGET!
Bring your friends to our big OPEN HOUSE!
December 14, 1987

BLAKE'S RELEVANT RAMBLINGS

The GFA Compiler (version 1.8 US) Reviewed
reprinted from
Rockford Atari Computer Club Newsletter
October 1987

One of GFA Basic's best features is that it has the capability of being compiled with the GFA Basic Compiler. In this way it is possible to write a program in Basic, and compile it into a true machine code program (which means you'll no longer need to load GFA Basic or the Runtime module to run the program).

The manual (all 20 or so pages of it) that comes with the Compiler explains the options available when compiling a program, and also explains which Basic commands are irrelevant to the compiler. Commands such as "Stop" and "Continue" are ignored by the compiler, and some others such as "Resume" may require that a few line labels be added to the program. It also contains a few hints on speeding up a program's execution speed. It would be nice if the manual went into a little more depth and contained a few more examples, but it's usable.

I found the Compiler to work flawlessly in most cases, but I did find what seems to be a bug. The compiler doesn't seem to properly trap a disk error. Even if the original GFA Basic program handled the error properly, the compiled version would crash on a disk error. Most other "bugs" can be traced to incorrect code in the GFA Basic program that you're trying to compile (be especially ware of "Resume" commands). If you're having trouble with "Resume" commands in compiled versions of your program, the Compiler has an option that will allow a "Resume Next" to function normally: set the "Stop" option to "Ever" on the Compiler options dialog box. This will slow the program down a little bit because it keeps track of what command it just executed, but the compiled version will still be 2 to 3 times faster than the Basic version.

I have really become addicted to the compiler, as it speeds up most GFA Basic programs by at least 2 or 3 times (even for math-intensive programs, which is what I've been writing lately), and it sure beats loading the GFA Basic Editor or Runtime Module to run a program! At first glance the \$79.95 price may seem steep, but the GFA Compiler is well worth it, and turns GFA Basic into a powerful programming package. The GFA Compiler is distributed by MichTron, 576 Telegraph, Pontiac, MI 48053. (313) 334-5700.

[illegible]

Bring your favorite joystick for the big
Midi-Maze competition on December 14, 1987!!

COMPUTALK TCS
P.O. BOX 18346 / Fort Worth, Texas 76118

P.A.C.E.

BBS

963-1355

Message Board

Downloads

Announcements



TECHNICAL ADVICE

Do your program and hardware manuals leave you feeling like you can't read English???

Does your disk drive seem at times to run backwards???

Does it seem that you know nothing about using an Atari computer???

If you have ever faced any or all of these problems, you probably realize what a relief it was to call up someone knowledgeable for help and advice. Users' groups like P.A.C.E. can be a real help to the average computer owner. We are fortunate to have several very competent people as members. Four of our members have volunteered to be available for technical advice.

You can call one of the following when you feel you are having a problem with your Atari system:

Mark Spiros..... (412) 335-4477

Paul Rude.....(412) 898 1931

Dave Farbacher.....(412) 963-8600

Jack Liebmann.....(412) 521-0903

[illegible]

November, 1987

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 8-Bit & Reg Mtg.	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Board Mtg.	17	18 News Dead- line	19	20	21
22	23 ST Sig Mtg.	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December, 1987

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 *OPEN HOUSE *****	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Board Mtg.	22	23 News Dead- line	24	25	26
27	28 Xmas Dinner *****	29	30	31		

NOTE: December 14 will be the big combined meeting (8-Bit AND 16-Bit) and OPEN HOUSE! There is NO meeting on December 28. Instead, we are having our Christmas Dinner. See the application for reservations elsewhere in the newsletter!!

All meetings (not the dinner) will be at the Green Tree Marriott at 7:00 P.M.

[illegible]

DON'T MISS THE BIG
OPEN HOUSE



A-Bit-Better Computer Center

"The Atari Connection"
(412) 941-2029 or (412) 471-7533



This is to introduce you to the one group that really needs no introduction in regards to Atari because we alone have advertised Atari products through all area media since the very beginning of Atari.

We are this area's first and only complete Atari dealer carrying everything from the 2600 game machine, 8-Bit computers, 520 and 1040 STs, to the new Mega ST. Software at mailorder prices everyday--"We can't get it for you;" in most cases we already have it! Every customer is a V.I.P. here, with no obligations. Here, at "A-Bit-Better Computer Center," you can try before you buy. Buy 1 or cheaper by the dozen.

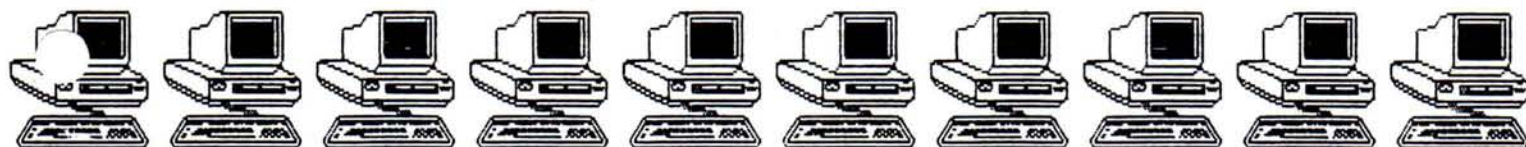
Over an eight-year period, we have introduced every new Atari product to the greater Pittsburgh tri-state area, and we have always initiated every new price break through. We have offered everything to go in, on, and around every Atari computer.

In regards to service: we are this area's ONLY long-time, continuous factory-authorized service center for every Atari hardware product ever made. We have always been first with new products and have offered one of this country's most complete selections of all Atari hardware, software, and accessories. All of this has given us the unique reputation as "The Atari Connection."

Our first 15 years in business as "The Toy Store" became radically changed when Atari came into business. As our business became more and more computers and less and less toys, we have changed our name to "A-Bit-Better Computer Center." We are the only people in the entire area that can boast of being in the same location for 22 years.

We hope that our long standing name and reputation will make you more confident and comfortable.

Help us celebrate our 8th year with Atari...Bring in this ad and we will give you 33% off your next software purchase. (Based on manufacturer's suggested list price.) This offer expires 11/27/87.



3878 Washington Road
McMurray, PA 15317

This month we're going to scrutinize the curious behavior of the ST computer when it's under stress, and look at some strange data lurking in the ST ROMs. I should warn you right at the outset that following some of the directions contained in this column will ***CRASH*** your computer, so be sure

...Martha



PRESIDENT'S REPORT
by Lanny Shoup

It's on with the shows!

First, it's our PACE OPEN HOUSE on December 14, 1987. Don't forget to bring your friends and neighbors to see the Atari computers in action and get hands on guidance to all your questions. We plan to have a mega at the show for you to see, plus all your favorite software and some soon-to-be-favorite software. We are planning to have raffles and door prizes. Something new to me is the Chinese auction. This is where any member looking to sell something can place an item up for auction with a minimum asking price. There will be tags available for any member to mark their bottom price. As people go by the items, if there is anything they want, they just mark their number on the tag with their bid. If someone else wants it also, they mark their number and up the bid price. At the end of the night all persons will be given one last chance to increase their bids, if necessary, by regular auction until there are no bidders. The highest bidders will purchase

the items from their owners. There will be no charges made by PACE for items on auction or for the bidders. This is an excellent time for you to bring those items you no longer use and make some extra Christmas money.

Remember to bring:

Your friends.
Items to sell.
Christmas spirit.

Second, we will be hosting our second annual Tri-State Area Atari Computer Product Show at Robert Morris College Moon Township campus. The dates are Saturday, March 19, 10:00 to 6:00 and Sunday, March 20, 12:00 to 5:00. Spread the word high and low. We are in the process of making posters and setting up advertising. Any and all assistance on spreading the word is welcome! If anyone has a desire to help, please let me know.

Several board members were at the Washington, D.C. Show, where they had a splendid time. Our show invitations were accepted with great enthusiasm. Sixteen vendors said they would like to, or were planning to come. Some were even more emphatic about not missing it. Atari said they will be seeing us there.

I hope everybody has a happy and safe Thanksgiving, and don't eat too much turkey!

P.A.C.E. HOLIDAY DINNER

December 28, 1987 BULLSHOTS RESTAURANT 7:00 P.M.

Yes we will attend _____ Number in Party _____ Phone # _____
(Name)

DINNER SELECTION

- ___ 26 OZ. Strip Steak \$8.95
- ___ 12 oz. Black Angus Strip Steak \$10.95
- ___ Pork Chops 2 loin cut chops \$7.95
- ___ Stuffed Flounder oven baked with crabmeat stuffing \$7.95
- ___ 8 Breaded Deep Fried Shrimp \$7.95

All dinner entrees include house salad, Potatoe & loaf of bread.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 15 TO:

JOHN SATRIANO
969 EDNA STREET
BRIDGEVILLE PA. 15017